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ACTION AF-01

RELEASED IN FULL

INFO	LOG-00	AID-01	A-01	CA-02	CCO-00	CIAE-00	CTME-00
	C-01	OASY-00	DODE-00	DOEE-00	DS-00	EB-01	EUR-01
	FBO-01	HA-09	H-01	IMMC-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-16
	LAB-01	L-01	ADS-00	M-00	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OCS-06
	OIC-02	OMB-01	OPR-01	PA-01	PM-01	PRS-01	P-01
	SCT-03	SNP-00	SP-00	SR-00	SS-00	STR-01	TRSE-00
	T-00	USIE-00	USSS-00	ASDS-01	RPE-01	/058W	
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O 221154Z FEB 94  
FM AMEMBASSY KIGALI  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5785  
INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY KAMPALA PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE PRIORITY  
USCINCEUR VAHINGEN GE PRIORITY  
USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 KIGALI 00784

STATE FOR AF/C AND DSS/OP/AF  
BUJUMBURA FOR RSO  
YAOUNDE FOR DATT

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E.O. 12356: DECL:OADR  
TAGS: PINS, ASEC, PHUM, PGOV, RW  
SUBJECT: MINISTER/POLITICIAN ASSASSINATED

1. (C) SUMMARY. UNIDENTIFIED GUNMEN SHOT AND  
KILLED OPPOSITION POLITICIAN AND MINISTER FELICIEN  
GATABAZI OUTSIDE HIS KIGALI HOME EVENING OF 2/21.  
THE INCIDENT COINCIDED WITH YET ANOTHER BREAKDOWN OF  
TALKS OVER FORMATION OF TRANSITION INSTITUTIONS,  
TARGETED FOR 2/22, AND FOLLOWS TWO DAYS OF SOMETIMES

VIOLENT DEMONSTRATIONS IN KIGALI. NO ONE HAS CLAIMED RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ASSASSINATION, BUT FINGERS WILL UNDOUBTEDLY POINT AT BOTH THE PRESIDENT'S SIDE AND THE RPF. ANGRY PSD YOUTH COULD CAUSE INSECURITY TO ESCALATE BOTH IN KIGALI AND BUTARE, GATABAZI'S HOME. EMBASSY WARDEN NET WAS ACTIVATED FOR OFFICIAL AND NON-OFFICIAL AMERICANS DURING HOLIDAY WEEKEND TO KEEP AMCITS APPRISED OF THE SITUATION. THE EMERGENCY ACTION COMMITTEE MET MORNING 2/22 AND WILL CONTINUE TO MONITOR THE SITUATION AND INFORM THE COMMUNITY. ALL REGISTERED AMERICANS ARE ACCOUNTED FOR AND SAFE. END SUMMARY.

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GATABAZI ASSASSINATED  
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2. (U) FELICIEN GATABAZI, MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS AND ENERGY AND EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE SOCIAL DEMOCRAT PARTY (PSD), WAS ASSASSINATED BY UNIDENTIFIED ARMED MEN OUTSIDE HIS HOME AT ABOUT 10PM MONDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 21. ONE OF HIS GENDARME

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BODY GUARDS WAS ALSO KILLED AND ANOTHER IS SERIOUSLY INJURED. FOLLOWING THE BURST OF AUTOMATIC GUNFIRE THAT KILLED THE MINISTER, A SERIES OF GRENADES EXPLODED IN THE VALLIES BETWEEN THE PRINCIPAL HILLS WHERE AMERICANS LIVE IN KIGALI.

3. (U) GATABAZI, THE HIGHEST RANKING POLITICAL LEADER TO BE ASSASSINATED SINCE MULTI-PARTY POLITICS BEGAN NEARLY THREE YEARS AGO, HAS PLAYED A KEY ROLE IN THE PSD AND IN THE DEMOCRATIZATION PROCESS, MOST RECENTLY IN HELPING TO BROKER PARTY DIFFERENCES AND REESTABLISH THE UNITY OF THE OPPOSITION PARTIES. HIS KILLING FOLLOWS BY NINE MONTHS THE UNRESOLVED ASSASSINATION OF EMMANUEL GAPYISI, AN LEADING POLITICIAN IN MDR, THE PARTY OF PM-DESIGNATE TWAGIRAMUNGU. AN INVESTIGATION IN UNDER WAY INTO THE KILLING, FOR WHICH NO ONE HAS CLAIMED RESPONSIBILITY.

4. (LOU) THE ASSASSINATION OCCURRED AS GATABAZI WAS RETURNING HOME FROM A MEETING AT WHICH THE PRIME MINISTER-DESIGNATE AND HIS SUPPORTERS SOUGHT TO RESOLVE OUTSTANDING DIFFERENCES THAT WOULD HAVE ALLOWED INSTALLATION OF TRANSITION INSTITUTIONS AS ANNOUNCED FEBRUARY 22 (SEE SEPTTEL).

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TWO DAYS OF DISTURBANCES

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5. (U) THE ASSASSINATION CAPPED TWO DAYS OF  
DISTURBANCES IN KIGALI THAT LEFT AT LEAST EIGHT  
PEOPLE DEAD. ON SUNDAY 2/20, DISTURBANCES AIMED AT  
PREVENTING PARTICIPATION IN A POLITICAL RALLY CALLED  
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BY THE PRIME MINISTER-DESIGNATE'S FACTION OF THE MDR  
RESULTED IN DAMAGE TO CARS ON THE ROAD TO THE RALLY  
SITE. IN A NEARBY NEIGHBORHOOD, RESIDENTS ATTACKED  
AND KILLED SIX OUTSIDERS WHO, AFTER PILLAGING FOUR  
HOUSES, IDENTIFIED THEMSELVES AS MEMBERS OF THE MDR  
FACTION OPPOSING THE PM-DESIGNATE. RESIDENTS REPORT,  
HOWEVER, THAT THEY WERE CARRYING PARTY CARDS FOR THE  
PRESIDENT'S MRND AND THE HUTU-SUPREMICIST CDR.  
ANOTHER TWO PERSONS WERE REPORTEDLY KILLED WHEN THEIR  
BICYCLE COLLIDED WITH A CAR. GENDARMES AND UN FORCES  
(UNAMIR) PATROLLING IN VEHICLES AND HELICOPTERS KEPT  
THE VIOLENCE FROM ESCALATING OR SPREADING.

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O 221154Z FEB 94  
FM AMEMBASSY KIGALI  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5786  
INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA PRIORITY  
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6. (U) ON MONDAY AFTERNOON, 2/21, THE CDR  
DEMONSTRATED OUTSIDE THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
TO PROTEST BEING DENIED THE RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE IN  
THE YET-TO-BE-FORMED TRANSITION ASSEMBLY. THEY CLAIM  
THE FOREIGN MINISTER HAS PREVENTED THE CDR ACCESS TO  
THE CODE OF ETHICS WHICH PARTIES MUST SIGN BEFORE  
THEY CAN PARTICIPATE. THE DEMONSTRATION, WHICH BEGAN  
ABOUT 4 PM, WAS CONTAINED BY THE GENDARMES AND UNAMIR  
OBSERVERS. GENDARMES DISBURSED THE DEMONSTRATORS,  
NUMBERING ABOUT TWENTY, WITH TEARGAS ABOUT 11 PM,  
ALLOWING MINISTRY PERSONNEL, HELD VIRTUAL HOSTAGES IN  
THEIR OFFICES DURING THE DEMONSTRATION, TO RETURN TO  
THEIR HOMES.

MOTIVES MUDDLED

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7. (U) RADIO FRANCE INTERNATIONAL (RFI) BROADCAST

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MORNING 2/22 INTERVIEWS WITH PSD PRESIDENT  
NZAMARAMBAHO AND A MEMBER OF GATABAZI'S FAMILY.  
NZAMARAMBAHO BLAMED PERSONS WHO WANT TO DERAIL THE  
ARUSHA PEACE PROCESS AND PREVENT THE TRANSITION  
INSTITUTIONS FROM BEING INSTALLED FOR GATABAZI'S  
DEATH. THE FAMILY MEMBER, POSSIBLY A HIGH-LEVEL  
GENDARME, SAID ONLY THAT AN INVESTIGATION WAS  
UNDERWAY.

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8. (U) HUTU EXTREMIST RADIO RTLM IS EXPLAINING THE  
GATABAZI ASSASSINATION AS THE WORK OF PM-DESIGNATE  
TWAGIRAMUNGU, WHO, AS AN ACOLYTE OF THE RPF, IS  
CARRYING OUT THE RPF POLICY OF ELIMINATING HUTU  
LEADERS. THEY CITE THE ASSASSINATION LAST MAY OF MDR  
LEADER GAPIYISI AS ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF THIS STRATEGY  
FOR WHICH RTLM BLAMES TWAGIRAMUNGU.

GATABAZI BIO DATA  
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9. (U) GATABAZI, AN ARTICULATE AND FORCEFUL  
POLITICAL LEADER, BEGAN HIS GOVERNMENT SERVICE AS  
MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS IN 1976, IN THE FIRST  
CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT OF PRESIDENT HABYARIMANA. HE  
HELD THIS POSITION UNTIL 1982 WHEN HE WAS CONVICTED  
FOR DIVERTING FUNDS FROM REFUGEE ACTIVITIES AND SPENT  
ABOUT 8 MONTHS IN JAIL. WHEN THE COALITION  
GOVERNMENT TOOK OFFICE IN APRIL 1992, GATABAZI WAS  
NAMED AGAIN TO HEAD THE MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS, A  
MINISTRY ATTRIBUTED TO THE PSD. GATABAZI IS  
WIDELY-BELIEVED TO HAVE ENRICHED HIMSELF DURING HIS  
MINISTERIAL TENURE, BOTH RECENTLY AND EARLIER.  
TRACTS AND SIGNED STATEMENTS HAVE CIRCULATED RECENTLY  
TO THIS EFFECT.

10. (C) WHEN HE RESUMED CONTROL OF THE PUBLIC WORKS  
MINISTRY, GATABAZI CAME INTO DIRECT CONFLICT WITH THE  
PRESIDENT OVER A PLAN TO REORGANIZE THE MINISTRY IN A  
WAY THAT WOULD SIDELINE THE PRESIDENT'S SON-IN-LAW,  
DIRECTOR OF THE LUCRATIVE OFFICE OF BRIDGES AND  
ROADS. RUMORS SUGGESTED THAT THE SON-IN-LAW

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CONTROLLED A SLUSH-FUND USED TO FINANCE MRND AND CDR  
ACTIVITIES, AND, SOME SAY, DEATH SQUAD ACTIVITIES.  
THE REORGANIZATION PLAN, WHICH NEEDED PRESIDENTIAL  
SIGNATURE, HAS NEVER BEEN APPROVED.

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PSD PLAYS KEY ROLE

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11. (C) THE PSD IS THE ONE PARTY OPPOSED TO THE  
PRESIDENT THAT HAS SURVIVED WITHOUT LEADERSHIP  
DIVISIONS DURING THE PAST SIX MONTHS. RUMORS THAT  
SOME OF THE PARTY'S DESIGNATED ASSEMBLY DELEGATES HAD  
GONE OVER TO THE PRESIDENT'S SIDE IN THE CURRENT  
TUG-OF-WAR WERE COUNTERED AT A PRESS CONFERENCE IN  
WHICH ALL ELEVEN REAFFIRMED THEIR COMMITMENT TO THE  
PSD AND DENIED LOYALTY TO EITHER THE MRND OR THE

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RPF. GATABAZI AND THE PSD HAVE PLAYED KEY ROLES IN RECENT EFFORTS TO BROKER SOLUTIONS TO THE POLITICAL PARTY DIFFERENCES BLOCKING FORMATION OF TRANSITION INSTITUTIONS. THEY HAVE REMAINED SOLIDLY IN THE CAMP OF THE PRIME MINISTER-DESIGNATE AND THE RPF.

COMMENT

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12. (C) THE MOTIVES FOR THE ASSASSINATION OF GATABAZI ARE FAR FROM CLEAR. HUTU EXTREMISTS WILL UNDOUBTEDLY TRY TO USE THE TRAGEDY TO STIR ANTI-TUTSI AND ANTI-RPF EMOTIONS, POSSIBLY TO PROVOKE AN RPF RESPONSE AND LAY THE BLAME ON THEM FOR PROLONGING THE POLITICAL IMPASSE. THE OPPOSITION WILL NO DOUBT BLAME THE PRESIDENT'S SUPPORTERS, EITHER THE PRESIDENTIAL GUARD, WHO GENERALLY HAVE ACCESS TO WEAPONS, OR THE PARTY YOUTH, THE INTERAHAMWE. WHETHER AN INVESTIGATION WILL TURN UP ANY SOLID EVIDENCE IS QUESTIONABLE.

13. (C) THE EMBASSY IS MONITORING THE SITUATION CLOSELY. WE DO NOT ANTICIPATE AT THIS TIME THAT IT WILL GET OUT OF HAND. UNAMIR HAS PLAYED A POSITIVE AND HELPFUL ROLE IN CONTAINING AND PREVENTING ESCALATION OF THE VIOLENCE WITH RAPID RESPONSES AND A

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CONTINUOUS PRESENCE AT TROUBLE SPOTS DURING THE PAST  
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THREE DAYS. WE CAN, HOWEVER, ANTICIPATE CLASHES  
BETWEEN THE PSD PARTY YOUTH AND YOUTH OF THE MRND/CDR  
PARTIES BOTH IN KIGALI AND BUTARE, THE HOME OF  
GATABAZI WHERE THE FUNERAL WILL TAKE PLACE ON  
THURSDAY 2/24. MEANWHILE, KENYA AIRWAYS HAS  
CANCELLED ITS FLIGHT TO KIGALI AFTERNOON OF 2/22,  
STRANDING SOME AMERICAN VISITORS IN KIGALI AND SOME  
OFFICIAL AMERICAN SPOUSES IN NAIROBI.

14. (C) THE EMBASSY KEPT THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY,  
BOTH OFFICIAL AND NON-OFFICIAL, INFORMED ABOUT THE  
SECURITY SITUATION 2/20-21 VIA THE WARDEN NETS. THE  
EMERGENCY ACTION COMMITTEE MET MORNING OF 2/22 TO  
REVIEW THE SITUATION AND WILL CONSULT AFTERNOON OF  
2/22 TO DETERMINE WHAT FURTHER ADVICE TO PROVIDE THE  
COMMUNITY. ALL AMERICANS ARE CURRENTLY SAFE AND  
ACCOUNTED FOR.

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